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**APPLICATION FOR UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT**

**FOR**

**IMPROVED THERMAL INTERFACE**

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## **IMPROVED THERMAL INTERFACE**

### **TECHNICAL FIELD**

**[0001]** The invention generally relates to cooling electronic apparatuses and systems, and in particular, but not exclusively, thermal interface material.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**[0002]** As electronic devices become more powerful and smaller (i.e., more densely packed), the power consumed by these electronic devices can result in a large amount of generated heat. The heat generated by these electronic devices may be detrimental to the operation of the electronic devices. Accordingly, a common concern associated with electronic components is heat removal.

**[0003]** For example, an electronic device may include an integrated circuit (IC) die. A thermal management device may be thermally coupled to the IC die to facilitate dissipation of heat from the IC die. Commonly, the thermal management device may be in the form of a heat sink type device. Accordingly, heat may be transferred from the IC die to the thermal management device, and in turn, the thermal management device facilitates transfer of the heat to the surrounding environment.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

**[0004]** The various embodiments of the invention is illustrated by way of example and not by way of limitation in the figures of the accompanying drawings, in which the like references indicate similar elements and in which:

**[0005]** **Figure 1** illustrates an apparatus having an interface comprising a number of nanostructures, in accordance with various embodiments of the invention;

**[0006]** **Figure 2** illustrates an interface having a number of nanostructures, in accordance with one embodiment of the invention;

**[0007]** **Figure 3** illustrates an interface having a number of nanostructures, in accordance with another embodiment of the invention;

**[0008]** **Figure 4** illustrates an interface having a number of nanostructures, in accordance with another embodiment of the invention;

**[0009]** **Figure 5** illustrates an apparatus having an interface having a number of nanostructures, in accordance with various embodiments of the invention; and

**[0010]** **Figure 6** illustrates one of many possible systems in which embodiments of the present invention may be utilized.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

**[0011]** In various embodiments, an apparatus having an interface comprising a number of nanostructures disposed between a thermal management device and a heat source is described. In the following description, various embodiments will be described. However, one skilled in the relevant art will recognize that the various embodiments may be practiced without one or more of the specific details, or with other methods, materials, components, etc. In other instances, well-known structures, materials, or operations are not shown or described in detail to avoid obscuring aspects of various embodiments of the invention. Similarly, for purposes of explanation, specific numbers, materials and configurations are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the invention. Nevertheless, the invention may be practiced without the specific details. In other instances, well-known features are omitted or simplified in order not to obscure the invention. Furthermore, it is understood that the various embodiments shown in the figures are illustrative representations and are not necessarily drawn to scale.

**[0012]** Reference throughout this specification to “one embodiment” or “an embodiment” means that a particular feature, structure, material, or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment of the invention. Thus, the appearances of the phrases “in one embodiment” or “in an embodiment” in various places throughout this specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment or invention. Furthermore, the particular features, structures, materials, or characteristics may be combined in any suitable manner in one or more embodiments.

**[0013]** Various operations will be described as multiple discrete operations in turn, in a manner that is most helpful in understanding the invention. However, the order of description should not be construed as to imply that these operations are necessarily order dependent. In particular, these operations need not be performed in the order of presentation.

**[0014]** **Figure 1** illustrates an apparatus having an interface comprising a number of nanostructures, in accordance with various embodiments of the invention. Illustrated in **Fig. 1** is cross sectional side like view of an apparatus **100**. In **Fig. 1**, the apparatus **100** includes a thermal management device **102**, a heat source **104**, and an interface **106** disposed between the thermal management device **102** and the heat source **104**. In accordance with various embodiments, the interface **106** has a number of nanostructures. As will be described in further detail, the interface **106** facilitates at least improved adhesion and thermal conductivity between the thermal management device **102** and the heat source **104**.

**[0015]** In various embodiments, the thermal management device **102** may be part of a passive cooling device such as, but not limited to, a heat sink, a heat spreader, heat pipes, a heat slug, and the like, and any combination thereof. Alternatively, in various embodiments, the thermal management device **102** may be part of an active cooling device such as, but not limited to, an air jet impingement device, a dielectric liquid device, and any combination thereof.

**[0016]** In various embodiments, the heat source **104** may include an integrated circuit (IC), which may be in the form of a rectangular piece of semiconductor material commonly known as a chip or a die. Some examples of semiconductor material may

include, but are not limited to, silicon, silicon on sapphire, silicon on insulator, gallium arsenide, and any combination thereof.

**[0017]**        **Figure 2** illustrates an interface having a number of nanostructures, in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. In **Fig. 2**, a detailed view of an interface **206** between a heat source **204** and a thermal management device **202** is shown. The interface **206** includes a number of nanostructures **208**. In the embodiment illustrated, the nanostructures **208** may be formed on the heat source **204**, while the thermal management device **202** does not necessarily have nanostructures **208**. Further, the nanostructures **208** are shown extending away from the heat source **204**.

**[0018]**        In various embodiments, the nanostructures **208** may comprise of carbon nanotubes. That is, each of the nanostructures **208** may have an approximate diameter of 0.6 to 1.8 nanometers, and a length of approximately 1-100 microns. The carbon nanotubes may be single walled, multi-walled, of various shapes, and may be coated with various coatings such as, but not limited to, metals. Accordingly, each of the nanostructures **208** may have relatively high heat transmission abilities such as, but not limited to, as high as 6000 Watts per meter Kelvin, thereby facilitating improved heat transfer between the heat source **204** and the thermal management device **202**. Further, the nanostructures **208** may be formed from a variety of manners such as, but not limited to, utilizing an arc fullerene generator, chemical vapor deposition (CVD), and laser blasting.

**[0019]**        Continuing to refer to **Fig. 2**, in the illustrated embodiment, the nanostructures **208** may facilitate adhesion between the heat source **204** and the

thermal management device **202** due to various interactions between the nanostructures **208** and the thermal management device **202**. For example, the nanostructures **208** may be attracted to thermal management device **202**, in particular, to the surface of the thermal management device **202**, due to Van der Waals' type forces.

**[0020]** In various embodiments, the nanostructures **208** may have molecules that helps to facilitate adhesion. For example, in one embodiment, the nanostructures **208** may have molecules in the form of flexible polymers such as, but not limited to, single stranded deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) molecules. The molecules facilitate covalent type bonding between the nanostructures **208** and the thermal management device **202**. Utilization of molecules with various nanostructures such as carbon nanostructures is known, and accordingly, will not be described in further detail.

**[0021]** In the embodiment illustrated in **Fig. 2**, the nanostructures **208** may be formed on the heat source **204**. However, in alternate embodiments, the nanostructures **208** may be formed on the heat management device **202**. Further, as will be described in detail, the nanostructures **208** may be formed on both the thermal management device **202** and the heat source **204**. Additionally, the nanostructures **202** are shown substantially extending away from a surface. However, it should be appreciated that the nanostructures **202** may be formed in a variety of directions and manners including, but not limited to, various angles relative to a surface.

**[0022]** As a result, the interface **206** having the nanostructures facilitates improved heat transfer and adhesion between the heat source **204** and the thermal management device **202**.

**[0023]**        **Figure 3** illustrates an interface having a number of nanostructures, in accordance with another embodiment of the invention. As shown in **Fig. 3**, an interface **306**, between a thermal management device **302** and a heat source **304**, includes a number of nanostructures **308 & 310**. In the illustrated embodiment, the nanostructures **308 & 310** may be formed on both the thermal management device **302** and the heat source **304**. Further, the nanostructures **308 & 310** extend away from their respective surfaces (i.e., nanostructures **308** formed on the thermal management device **302** extend toward the nanostructures **310** formed on the heat source **302**. As shown, the nanostructures **308** formed on the thermal management device **302** may interleave with the nanostructures **310** formed on the heat source **304**.

**[0024]**        The interleaved nanostructures **308 & 310** may be carbon nanotubes like structures, and accordingly, the interleaved nanostructures **308 & 310** may adhere to each other due to various attraction forces such as, but not limited to, Van der Waals' forces as previously described. Additionally, heat transfer between the thermal management device **302** and the heat source **304** may be improved due to the nanostructures **308 & 310** being made of nanostructures having relatively high thermal conductivity.

**[0025]**        In various embodiments, the nanostructures **308 & 310** may have molecules that facilitate adhesion, as previously described. For example, the nanostructure **308** formed on the thermal management device **302** and/or the nanostructure **310** formed on the heat source **304** may have molecules that facilitate adhesion. That is, the nanostructures **308 & 310** may have molecules in the form of flexible polymers on either or both of the nanostructures **310** formed on the heat source



**304** and the nanostructures **308** formed on the thermal management device **302**. As previously described, the molecules facilitate covalent type bonding between the nanostructures **308** & **310**.

[0026] **Figure 4** illustrates an interface having a number of nanostructures, in accordance with another embodiment of the invention. In **Fig. 4**, an interface **406** between a thermal management device **402** and a heat source **404** is shown in detail. As shown in **Fig. 4**, the heat source **404** may have a number of nanostructures **410** that may be disposed in a predetermined manner to further facilitate coupling of a number of nanostructures **408** that may be disposed on the thermal management device **402**. That is, in the embodiment illustrated in **Fig. 4**, the nanostructures **410** on the heat source **404** may be disposed in a pattern to receive the nanostructures **408** on the thermal management device **402**, which may also be in a pattern to be received by the nanostructures **410** on the heat source **404** (e.g., male/female type pattern).

Accordingly, the nanostructures **410** on the heat source **404** may be disposed to have recesses **412** while the nanostructures **408** on the thermal management device **402** may be disposed to have protrusions **414** that may be received into the recesses **412**.

[0027] The nanostructures **408** and **410** may be carbon nanotubes like structures, and may also have molecules to facilitate adhesion of the nanostructures **408** and **410** to each other, which in turn, facilitate adhesion of the thermal management device **402** and the heat source **404**.

[0028] **Figure 5** illustrates an apparatus having an interface having a number of nanostructures, in accordance with various embodiments of the invention. In **Fig. 5**, apparatus **500** may include a heat source **504** thermally coupled to an interface **506**.

Additionally, a thermal management device **502** is shown thermally coupled to the interface **506**. In turn, the thermal management device **502** is shown being thermally coupled to a heat dissipation device **510**. Disposed between the heat management device **502** and the heat dissipation device **510** may be a second interface **508**. The interface **506** and/or the second interface **508** may be of the type previously described with respect to **Figs. 1-4** or any combination thereof. In the illustrated embodiment, the heat source **504** may be in the form of an IC die, which may include integrated electrical devices and may be fabricated utilizing any suitable material and fabrication methods. In various embodiments, the heat source may comprise a microprocessor type chip having a silicon type substrate, as previously alluded to.

**[0029]** The heat source **504** may be electrically coupled to a substrate **520** via a number of solder bumps **522**. The substrate **520** may be electrically coupled to a wiring board **524** via solder balls **526**. In the illustrated embodiment of **Fig. 5**, the heat source **504** having the solder bumps **522**, the interface **506**, and the thermal management device **502** may be referred to as a semiconductor package. Accordingly, interfaces **506** and **508** may facilitate heat transfer and adhesion of various components of a semiconductor package.

**[0030]** Illustrated in **Fig. 5**, the thermal management device **502** may be thermally coupled to the heat dissipation device **510**. However, it should be appreciated by those skilled in the relevant art that the heat source **504** may be thermally coupled directly to the heat dissipation device **510**. That is, as previously alluded to, the thermal management device **502** may be a heat dissipations device as well.

[0031] **Figur 6** illustrates one of many possible systems in which embodiments of the present invention may be utilized. In **Fig. 6**, a system **600** may include apparatus **610** which may be similar to the apparatus **500** shown in **Fig. 5** having a heat source, a thermal management device, and an interface between the thermal management device and the heat source, where the interface has a number of nanostructures. Further, the apparatus **610** may be electrically coupled to a wiring board, which in turn, may be electrically coupled to various components.

[0032] In the illustrated embodiment of **Fig. 6**, a system **600** may include a memory device **612**, a graphic processor **614**, a mass storage device **616**, and an input/output module **618** coupled to each other by way of a bus **620**, as shown. Examples of memory device **612** include flash type memory, static random access (SRAM) memory, and dynamic random access memory (DRAM). Examples of mass storage device **616** include, but are not limited to, a hard disk drive, a compact disk drive (CD), a digital versatile drive (DVD), and so forth. Examples of the input/output modules **618** include, but not limited to, a keyboard, cursor control devices, a display, a network interface, and so forth. Examples of bus **620** include, but not limited to, a peripheral control interface (PCI) bus, and Industry Standard Architecture (ISA) bus, and so forth. In various embodiments, the system **600** may be a wireless mobile phone, a personal digital assistant, a pocket PC, a tablet PC, a notebook PC, a desktop computer, a set-top box, an entertainment unit, a DVD player, a server, and so forth.

[0033] Having described and illustrated the principles of the invention with reference to illustrated embodiments, it will be recognized that the illustrated embodiments can be modified in arrangement and detail without departing from such

principles. And, though the foregoing discussion has focused on particular embodiments, other configurations are contemplated. In particular, even though expressions such as "in one embodiment," "in another embodiment," or the like are used herein, these phrases are meant to generally reference embodiment possibilities, and are not intended to limit the invention to particular embodiment configurations. As used herein, these terms may reference the same or different embodiments that are combinable into other embodiments.

**[0034]** Thus, it can be seen from the above descriptions, a novel apparatus including an interface between a heat source and a thermal management device having a number of nanostructures has been described.

**[0035]** The above description of illustrated embodiments of the invention, including what is described in the Abstract, is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed. While specific embodiments of, and examples for, the invention are described herein for illustrative purposes, various equivalent modifications are possible within the scope of the invention, as those skilled in the relevant art will recognize. Thus, the description is to be regarded as illustrative instead of restrictive on the invention.

**[0036]** Consequently, in view of the wide variety of permutations to the embodiments described herein, this detailed description is intended to be illustrative only, and should not be taken as limiting the scope of the invention. What is claimed as the invention, therefore, is all such modifications as may come within the scope and spirit of the following claims and equivalents thereto.